



Disabled Women: Our Bodies, Our Rights





Disabled
women's rights
are human rights



Gender Matters in Disability

- The issues of greatest importance to disabled women in Scotland today.
- Disabled women's experiences of reproductive and parenting services can be very different to those of non-disabled women.



Aims of the project

- To find out more about disabled women's experiences of reproductive and parenting services
 - good experiences
 - bad experiences
 - how things could be improved
- To share what learn with health and social care professionals and policy-makers to help them improve services
- To share the views and experiences of disabled women



The Process

- Two large consultation events
- An on-line survey
- Workshops
- Roundtables
- Focus groups



We asked questions about

- **Pregnancy**
- **Sex**
- **Being a parent**
- **Contraception**
- **Periods**
- **Sex education**



Roundtables

- Social care
- Education
- Health



Focus Groups

5 out of 7 mothers with learning disabilities had their children permanently removed from their care.

- They didn't understand why
- They didn't feel that had enough been given enough support to look after their children
- They did not know how to deal with social workers



Focus Groups

- Not part of part of decision-making
- Not able to make choices
- Negative experiences of social services
- Felt that having children taken into care was inevitable
- Wanted support to parent, to support their children and to have families



Report Themes

- Parental rights
- Training and education
- Reproductive, sexual and maternal health services
- Violence against disabled women



Key Issues

- Really hard to get long term support.
- Too many children still being removed un-necessarily



WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

- Stigma and stereotyping
- Gender blind policy



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- Disabled women are judged & scrutinised
- Disabled parents are an overlooked population, needs not measured
- Parents with learning disabilities are up to 50 times more likely to have their children removed from them
- Lack of institutional support, legal aid, independent advocacy



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Data

Establish the number of disabled parents in Scotland

Commission research into disabled parents' experiences



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Policy

National parenting, child protection and disability rights policy should address the support needs of disabled mothers